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Sex's Outer Limits

One character gets his kicks pretending to shoot pretty women with a .22 rifle from his bedroom window. Another suffers from such an advanced case of post-coitum triste that he urinates on a woman. Then there is the fellow whose sleep is troubled by a nocturnal emission, and next morning he frantically hides his shorts from the prying eyes of an older woman. Not to mention the daredevil who copulates with a nimble Philippine girl on a wood-



ROSSET

Ahead of the galloping field.

en bench while she chats nonchalantly with a waitress passing by.

These are only a sampling of the variety of sexual practices and preferences presented in the pages of *Evergreen* magazine; for range and ingenuity they are unmatched in any other publication this side of the *Story of O*. In the past two to three years, freedom of sexual expression has increased at a galloping rate, and *Evergreen* has led the field. This is no surprise since its editor and publisher is Barney Rosset, 45, president of Grove Press, a house that specializes in erotica and avant-garde authors. Its hard-cover Black Circle books and its Black Cat and Zebra paperbacks embrace everything from outright pornography (*The Pearl*) to mystical flights of sexual fantasy (Jean Genet's *Miracle of the Rose*) to revolutionary calls to action (Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*). It also has a generous supply of European anti-novelists and provocative psychologists.

Last Frontier. Cheap girlie magazines have always catered to prurient interests, but *Evergreen* is not of that ilk. It

was started in 1957 as a paperbound book, publishing such unknown authors as Edward Albee, James Purdy, Samuel Beckett, Allen Ginsberg. In 1964, it was turned into a slick-paper magazine with striking art work and lots of color; its scatology is elegantly framed. With a circulation of some 160,000, the magazine recently changed from a bimonthly to a monthly.

Evergreen's editors claim that they are not on the lookout for adventurous sex; that just happens to be what people are writing about. "It is the last frontier," says Managing Editor Fred Jordan. "Sex also serves other functions and stands for things beyond itself. It can be a political statement." If sex, in fact, turns sour in so many *Evergreen* stories, the editors believe that is a reflection of the times, specifically the anguish over the Viet Nam war.

And sex, truth to tell, is cheerless in *Evergreen*. Women are not so much to be loved as abused, and the varieties are impressive. One writer, E. F. Cherrytree, candidly reveals his special hang-up: a passion to see women fighting each other, the bloodier the better. "It's my biggest sex pleasure and has been since I was four. I'm 35 now." *Evergreen* illustrated this treatise with a few pages of sketches of two shapely girls, one blonde, one mauve, going at it tooth and claw. The piece evoked considerable response, says Rosset, all of it favorable. "We really stumbled on something," he says, adding that he could have devoted an entire issue to that idiosyncrasy.

Appealing to another set of readers is a comic-strip character named Phoebe Zeit-Geist, a curvaceous nude who is continually being assaulted by men, women, animals and monsters. From each scrape, she escapes with her smooth skin, at least, entirely intact. When one tormentor turned out to be a German army officer, the issue was banned in West Germany. Two issues later, *Evergreen* gave equal time, as it were, and made Phoebe's torturer a rabbi. Having mined that vein, *Evergreen* temporarily dropped Phoebe after one last mass orgy of sadism in which all her enemies ganged up on her.

Cult of Revolution. *Evergreen's* politics is as far out as its sex. It subscribes to the New Left roster of revolutionary heroes: Che Guevara, Castro, Malcolm X, Ho Chi Minh, Stokely Carmichael. It has published LeRoi Jones's furious diatribes against whites, mainly Jewish: "The little arty bastards talking arithmetic they sucked from the Arab's head." While not taking it too seriously, Rosset excuses black anti-Semitism on the grounds that Jewish merchants, after all, have exploited Negroes in the ghetto. "We agree with practically everything LeRoi says," explains Rosset, "except that he won't talk to us."

Though *Evergreen* is friendly to white, so Jones, increasingly surly, demanded that the magazine return his latest manuscripts to him, unpublished.

or bidders for hot political memoirs. Its first catch was Kim Philby, the British master spy, for whose reminiscences it paid more than \$50,000; the first installment appears in the April issue. With only marginal advertising, *Evergreen* does not quite break even by charging \$1 an issue. But by developing young writers in the magazine, Rosset stands to recover his investment when they become popular and he publishes their books.